

Attachment 1 - Request for Information

The purpose of this call for information is to assist the Forest Service and Department of the Interior in determining the airworthiness of commercial airtanker aircraft for potential future firefighting contracts. It is not the intention of the Forest Service to eliminate any aircraft based on the requested information. Rather, we wish to thoroughly evaluate all aircraft. The requested information will be used to make a comprehensive decision whether or not to return them to service. All aircraft will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of the information provided and not necessarily by the quantity. We may also need additional information and requested that you provide a point of contact for us to use during this process.

In addition to the information requested in the FAA's *Draft-Structural Management and Inspection Criteria for use on Large Air Tankers for USDA & DOI* (see attachment), please provide responses to the following request for information. In some cases, the data may duplicate what is requested in the FAA draft document.

Current Condition of Aircraft.

1. NTSB recommendation A-04-29 requests, in part, that the Forest Service “develop maintenance and inspection programs for aircraft used in the firefighting environment that take into account and are based on: 1) the airplane’s original design requirements and its intended mission and operational life;” and 2) “the amount of operational life used before entering firefighting service.” To assist us in responding to this recommendation, please respond to the following:
 - a. How many previous flight hours were accumulated on each aircraft upon conversion to airtanker status (original design intent flight hours)?
 - b. When was the aircraft converted to airtanker status?
 - c. How many flight hours have been accumulated since conversion to airtanker status (new mission flight hours)?
 - d. Since conversion, how many flight hours do you estimate were flown in the low altitude fire environment?
 - e. Any additional information or data you deem relevant to this recommendation.
2. NTSB’s recommendation A-04-29 requests, in part, that the Forest Service “develop maintenance and inspection programs for aircraft that are in the firefighting environment that take into account and are based on;... 4) the impact of all previous flight hours (both public and civil) on the airplane’s remaining operational life.” To assist us in responding to this recommendation, please respond to the following:
 - a. Has an operational service life limit for this aircraft been determined for its original design intent? If so, what is it?
 - b. What methodology or engineering analysis has been accomplished to establish an operational service life for the firefighting environment?

- c. Is there a modified service life estimate based upon this methodology? If so, what is it?
 - d. If no service life has been established, is there an existing model or methodology to do so?
 - e. If there is no existing model or methodology, how would you propose to establish an operational service life for these aircraft?
 - f. If an operational service life exists or can be reliably established, provide documentation and analysis to establish remaining operational service life for each aircraft in your inventory.
 - g. Provide a listing of all structural damage or known exceedances experienced by each aircraft in your inventory, with documentation of required repairs and inspections.
 - h. Any additional information or data you deem relevant to this recommendation.
3. NTSB's recommendation A-04-29 requests, in part, that the Forest Service develop "maintenance and inspection programs for aircraft that are used in the firefighting environment that take into account and are based on; 3) the magnitude of maneuver loading and the level of turbulence in the firefighting environment." To assist us in responding to this recommendation, please respond to the following:
- a. What data is available to you to determine the cyclic loading and large magnitude maneuver loading encountered in the firefighting environment?
 - b. How does your maintenance and inspection program account for cyclic loading and large magnitude maneuver loading encountered in the firefighting environment?
 - c. Please describe and demonstrate evidence of compliance with any enhanced maintenance and inspection procedures (Sandia or others) that account for the change in use from your aircraft's original intent to the firefighting environment.
 - d. Provide any relevant maintenance and inspection data required by the aircraft's Type Certification to include compliance with existing Airworthiness Directives.
 - e. Please describe and demonstrate evidence of compliance with inspection programs and results which would address FAA corrosion control and prevention recommendations as described in the FAA's "Draft-Structural Management and Inspection Criteria for use on Large Air Tankers for USDA & DOI."
 - f. In the absence of evidence of compliance with the above, please forward a plan and schedule for meeting these requirements.
 - g. Any additional information or data you deem relevant to this recommendation.

4. **Maintenance and Inspection Programs for Continued Airworthiness in the Firefighting Environment.** The FAA has recommended that any findings from inspections for structural corrosion or fatigue must be shared by other operators of like airplanes. The NTSB recommendations and Blue Ribbon Panel also stress the critical importance of adequate Original Equipment Manufacture (OEM) support and information sharing on airworthiness issues. To assist us in responding to this recommendation, please respond to the following:
- a. Please describe the formal arrangement you have for ongoing support from the OEM. Provide contact information (name, phone number, address and email if available) for the principle point of contact at this OEM.
 - b. Describe and provide evidence of the types of technical support the original equipment manufacturer provides for their aircraft for updating manuals and publications, and dealing with results of accident investigations, service bulletins, operations in the firefighting environment, and continuing airworthiness.
 - c. For military surplus aircraft, what continuing support is available from the military?
 - d. What similar support is available from other sources?
 - e. How is this information formally incorporated into your maintenance and inspection program? Provide evidence of formal incorporation of OEM support into the maintenance and inspection program if available.
 - f. Is airworthiness information formally shared with other operators of similar aircraft type. If so, describe the process.
 - g. Any additional information or data you deem relevant to this recommendation.
5. **Preventing Fatigue Separations.** The NTSB's recommendation (A-04-29) has requested, in part, that the Forest Service "develop maintenance and inspection programs for aircraft that are used in the firefighting environment that take into account and are based on; 5) a detailed engineering evaluation and analysis to predict and prevent fatigue separations,"
- a. Can you demonstrate that "a detailed engineering evaluation and analysis to predict and prevent fatigue separations" has been accomplished for your aircraft type? If so, provide evidence and documentation to support this.
 - b. Does your maintenance and inspection program account for widespread fatigue damage (WFD) and multi-site damage (MSD) that may plague aging aircraft in the firefighting environment and result in fatigue separations? If so, how?
 - c. Any additional information or data you deem relevant to this recommendation.

Thank you for the time and effort to respond thoroughly to this call for information.

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